GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEFENCE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3992
ANSWERED ON:17.08.2000
HIJACKING OF ITALIAN SHIP
RAGHUNANDAN LAL BHATIA

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that the hijacked Italian Ship M.V. Medstar had headedtowards Mumbai on June 11, 2000, escorted by two Guard Vessels;

(b) if so, the details of the incident;

(c) whether further negotiations were concluded there to decide the fate of the 10 Iranian and 4 Iraqi Stowaways on board; and

(d) if so, the full facts thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES)

(a) to (d): A statement is attached.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3992 FO 17.8.2000.

The Coast Guard Regional Headquarters, Mumbai had receivedinformation from the Chairman, Kandla Port Trust on 9.6.2000 that Merchant vessel Medstar registered at Kings Town has reportedly been hijacked by 14 stowaways who had boarded the vessel at Port Bander Abbas, Iran. The stowaways comprising of 9(nine) Iranians and 5 (five) Iraqis claimed to have bomb with them and threatened to blow the ship if their instructions were not followed. The ship after loading 312 M T of granite at Bandar Abbas was scheduled to arrive at Kandla Port on 11.6.2000.

2. After conclusion of negotiations between the stowaways and the owners to bring the vessel to Mumbai, the vessel was escorted to Mumbai by the Coast Guard on 13th June, 2000. The master of the vessel informed the Coast Guard that the stowaways were not in possession of bomb. A joint investigation team comprising of representatives from Coast Guard, Navy, Customs, CBI and IBcarried out the investigation on Board ship. Representatives from Protectors Indemnity & Insurance Club (P&I Club), Bremen, Germany who had arrived at Mumbai along with an interpreter from Germany negotiated with the stowaways. Subsequently, the Iranian stowaways were issued with travel documents by the Iranian Embassy to travel by air and they left on 23.6.2000 while the Iraqi stowaways left for Bandar Abbas under escort of private security agency hired by the owners of the vessel.